FABLES.

By the late Mr. GAY.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

DUBLIN:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THese FABLES were finiſhed by Mr. GAY, and intended for the Preſs a ſhort time before his death; when they were left, with his other Papers, to the Care of his noble Friend and Patron, the DUKE of QUEENSBERRY: His Grace has accordingly permitted them to the Preſs, and they are here printed from the Originals in the Author's own Hand-writing. We hope they will pleaſe equally with his former Fables, though moſtly on a graver and more political Turn: They will certainly ſhew Him to have been (what he eſteemed the beſt Character) a man of a truly honeſt Heart, and a ſincere Lover of his Country.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TABLE

TABLE.

FABLE I. *To a* LAWYER.

THE Dog *and the* Fox. Page 1

FABLE II. *To a* FRIEND *in the Country.*

The Vultur, *the* Sparrow, *and other Birds.* 7

FABLE III. *To a* LEVEE-HUNTER.

The Baboon *and the* Poultry. 14

FABLE IV. *To a* FRIEND.

The Ant *in Office.* 21

FABLE V. *To a* COXCOMB.

The Bear *in a Boat.* 30

FABLE VI. *To a* COUNTRY-GENTLEMAN.

The Squire *and his* Cur. 37

FABLE VII. *To* MYSELF.

The Countryman *and* Jupiter. 46

FABLE VIII. *To my* NATIVE COUNTRY.

The Man, *the* Cat, *the* Dog, *and the* Fly. 54

FABLE IX. *To a* MODERN POLITICIAN.

The Jackall, Leopard, *and other Beasts.* 62

FABLE

TABLE.

FABLE X. *To the Reverend Dr.* SWIFT, *Dean of St.* Patrick's.

The Degenerate Bees. 69

FABLE XI. *To a* YOUNG NOBLEMAN.

The Pack-horse *and the* Carrier. 75

FABLE XII. *To a* YOUNG HEIR.

Pan *and* Fortune. 81

FABLE XIII.

Pluto, Cupid, *and* Time. 88

FABLE XIV. *To a* MOTHER.

The Owl, *the* Swan, *the* Cock, *the* Spider, *the* Ass, *and the* Farmer. 97

FABLE XV. *To a* POOR MAN.

The Cook-maid, *the* Turnspit, *and the* Ox. 104

FABLE XVI. *To* LAURA.

The Ravens, *the* Sexton, *and the* Earth-worm. 109

FABLE

FABLE I.

The Dog *and the* Fox.

To a *LAWYER.*

I KNOW you Lawyers can, with eaſe,
Twiſt words and meanings as you pleaſe;
That language, by your ſkill made pliant,
Will bend to favour ev'ry client;

That 'tis the fee directs the ſenſe
To make out either ſide's pretence.
When you peruſe the cleareſt caſe,
You ſee it with a double face;
For ſcepticiſm's your profeſſion;
You hold there's doubt in all expreſſion.
Hence is the bar with fees ſupply'd,
Hence eloquence takes either ſide:
Your hand would have but paultry gleaning,
Could ev'ry man expreſs his meaning.
Who dares preſume to pen a deed,
Unleſs you previouſly are feed?
'Tis drawn, and, to augment the coſt,
In dull prolixity engroſt:
And now we're well ſecur'd by law,
Till the next brother find a flaw.
Read o'er a will. Was't ever known,
But you could make the will your own?
For when you read, 'tis with intent
To find out meanings never meant.
Since things are thus, ſe defendendo,
I bar fallacious innuendo.

Sagacious

Sagacious Porta's ſkill could trace
Some beaſt or bird in ev'ry face;
The head, the eye, the noſe's ſhape,
Prov'd this an owl, and that an ape.
When, in the ſketches thus deſign'd,
Reſemblance brings ſome friend to mind;
You ſhow the piece, and give the hint,
And find each feature in the print;
So monſtrous like the portrait's found,
All know it and the laugh goes round.
Like him I draw from gen'ral nature:
Is't I or you then fix the Satire?

So, Sir, I beg you ſpare your pains
In making comments on my ſtrains:
All private ſlander I deteſt,
I judge not of my neighbour's breaſt;
Party and prejudice I hate,
And write no libels on the ſtate.

Shall not my fable cenſure vice,
Becauſe a knave is over-nice?
And, leſt the guilty hear and dread,
Shall not the Decalogue be read?

If I laſh vice in gen'ral fiction,
Is't I apply or ſelf-conviction?
Brutes are my theme. Am I to blame,
If men in morals are the ſame?
I no man call or ape or aſs;
'Tis his own conſcience holds the glaſs.
Thus void of all offence I write:
Who claims the fable, knows his right.

A ſhepherd's Dog, unſkill'd in ſports,
Pick'd up acquaintance of all ſorts:
Among the reſt a Fox he knew;
By frequent chat their friendſhip grew.

Says Reynard, 'tis a cruel caſe,
That man ſhould ſtigmatize our race.
No doubt, among us rogues you find,
As among dogs and human kind;
And yet, (unknown to me and you)
There may be honeſt men and true.
Thus ſlander tries, whate'er it can,
To put us on the foot with man.
Let my own actions recommend;
No prejudice can blind a friend:

You know me free from all diſguiſe;
My honour as my life I prize.
By talk like this from all miſtruſt
The dog was cur'd, and thought him juſt.
As on a time the Fox held forth
On conſcience, honeſty, and worth,
Sudden he ſtopt; he cock'd his ear;
Low dropt his bruſhy tail with fear.
Bleſs us! the hunters are abroad.
What's all that clatter on the road?
Hold, ſays the Dog, we're ſafe from harm:
'Twas nothing but a falſe alarm.
At yonder town 'tis market-day;
Some farmer's wife is on the way:
'Tis ſo, (I know her pye-ball'd mare)
Dame Dobbins with her poultry-ware.
Renard grew huff. Says he, This ſneer
From you I little thought to hear;
Your meaning in your looks I ſee.
Pray what's dame Dobbins, friend, to me?
Did I e'er make her poultry thinner?
Prove that I owe the dame a dinner.

Friend, quoth the Cur, I meant no harm:
Then why ſo captious? Why ſo warm?
My words, in common acceptation,
Could never give this provocation.
No lamb (for aught I ever knew)
May be more innocent than you.
At this, gall'd Renard winc'd and ſwore
Such language ne'er was giv'n before.
What's lamb to me? This faucy hint
Shows me, baſe knave, which way you ſquint.
If t'other night your maſter loſt
Three lambs; am I to pay the coſt?
Your vile Reflections would imply
That I'm the thief. You dog, you lye.
Thou knave, thou fool, (the Dog reply'd)
The name is juſt, take either ſide;
Thy guilt theſe applications ſpeak:
Sirrah, 'tis conſcience makes you ſqueak.
So ſaying, on the Fox he flies;
The ſelf-convicted felon dies.

FABLE

FABLE II.

The Vultur, *the* Sparrow, *and other Birds.*

To a FRIEND *in the Country.*

E'RE I begin, I muſt premiſe
Our miniſters are good and wiſe;
So, though malicious tongues apply,
Pray, what care they, or what care I?

If I am free with courts; be't known,
I ne'er preſume to mean our own.
If general morals ſeem to joke
On miniſters and ſuch like folk,
A captious fool may take offence;
What then? He knows his own pretence.
I meddle with no ſtate-affairs,
But ſpare my jeſt to ſave my ears.
Our preſent ſchemes are too profound,
For Machiavel himſelf to ſound:
To cenſure 'em I've no pretenſion;
I own they're paſt my comprehenſion.
You ſay your brother wants a place,
('Tis many a younger brother's caſe)
And that he very ſoon intends
To ply the court and teaze his friends.
If there his merits chance to find
A patriot of an open mind,
Whoſe conſtant actions prove him juſt
To both a king's and people's truſt,
May he, with gratitude, attend,
And owe his riſe to ſuch a friend.

You

You praiſe his parts for bus'neſs fit,
His learning, probity, and wit;
But thoſe alone will never do,
Unleſs his patron have 'em too.
I've heard of times, (pray God defend us,
We're not ſo good but he can mend us)
When wicked miniſters have trod
On kings and people, law and God;
With arrogance they girt the throne,
And knew no int'reſt but their own.
Then virtue, from preferment barr'd,
Gets nothing but it's own reward.
A gang of petty knaves attend 'em,
With proper parts to recommend 'em;
Then, if his patron burn with luſt,
The firſt in favours pimp the firſt.
His doors are never clos'd to ſpies,
Who chear his heart with double lyes;
They flatter him, his foes defame,
So lull the pangs of guilt and ſhame.
If ſchemes of lucre haunt his brain,
Projectors ſwell his greedy train;

Vile brokers ply his private ear
With jobs of plunder for the year:
All conſciences muſt bend and ply,
You muſt vote on, and not know why;
Through thick and thin you muſt go on;
One ſcruple, and your place is gone.

Since plagues like theſe have curſt a land,
And fav'rites cannot always ſtand,
Good courtiers ſhould for change be ready,
And not have principles too ſteady;
For ſhould a knave engroſs the pow'r,
(God ſhield the realm from that ſad hour)
He muſt have rogues or ſlaviſh fools;
For what's a knave without his tools?

Wherever thoſe a people drain,
And ſtrut with infamy and gain,
I envy not their guilt and ſtate,
And ſcorn to ſhare the public hate.
Let their own ſervile creatures riſe,
By ſcreening fraud and venting lyes:

Give

Give me, kind heav'n, * a private ſtation,
A mind ſerene for contemplation,
Title and profit I reſign,
The poſt of honour ſhall be mine.
My fables read, their merits view,
Then herd who will with ſuch a crew.

In days of yore (my cautious rhimes
Always except the preſent times)
A greedy Vultur, ſkill'd in game,
Inur'd to guilt, unaw'd by ſhame,
Approach'd the throne in evil hour,
And ſtep by ſtep intrudes to pow'r:
When at the royal eagle's ear
He longs to eaſe the monarch's care:
The monarch grants. With pride elate,
Behold him miniſter of ſtate!
Around him throng the feather'd rout;
Friends muſt be ſerv'd, and ſome muſt out.

* ——— *When impious men bear ſway,*
The poſt of honour is a private ſtation.

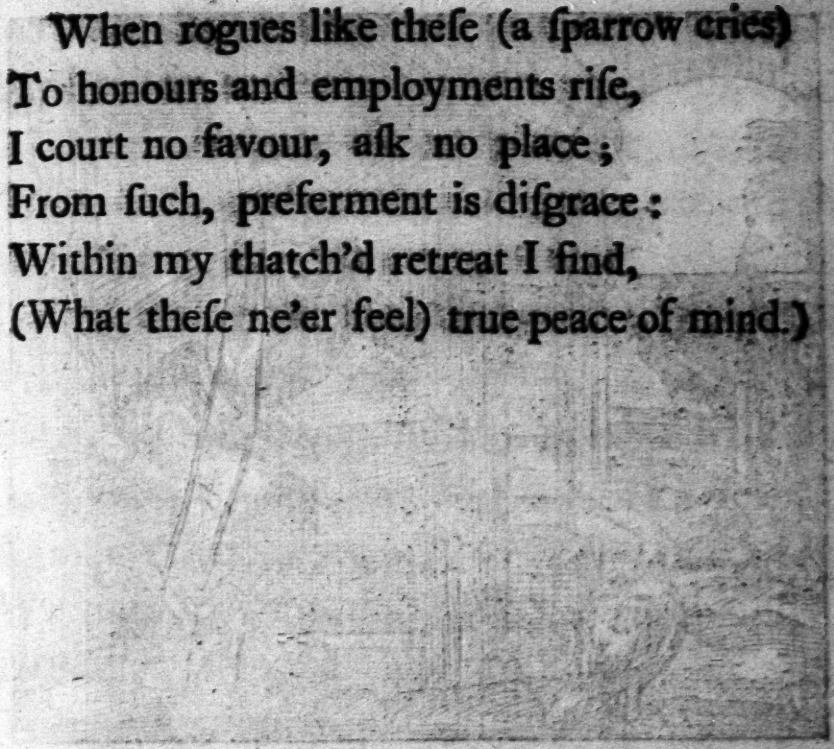
ADDISON.

Each

Each thinks his own the beſt pretenſion;
This aſks a place, and that a penſion.
The nightingale was ſet aſide:
A forward daw his room ſupply'd.
This bird, (ſays he) for bus'neſs fit,
Hath both ſagacity and wit;
With all his turns and ſhifts and tricks,
He's docile, and at nothing ſticks:
Then with his neighbours one ſo free
At all times will connive at me.
The hawk had due diſtinction ſhown,
For parts and talents like his own.
Thouſands of hireling cocks attend him,
As bluſt'ring bullies to defend him.
At once the ravens were diſcarded,
And magpies with their poſts rewarded.
Thoſe fowls of omen I deteſt,
That pry into another's neſt:
State lyes muſt loſe all good intent,
For they foreſee and croak th' event.
My friends ne'er think, but talk by rote
Speak what they're taught, and ſo to vote.

When

When rogues like theſe (a ſparrow cries)
To honours and employments riſe,
I court no favour, aſk no place;
From ſuch, preferment is diſgrace:
Within my thatch'd retreat I find,
(What theſe ne'er feel) true peace of mind.)



FABLE

FABLE III.

The Baboon *and the* Poultry.

To a LEVEE-HUNTER.

WE frequently miſplace eſteem
By judging men by what they ſeem.
To birth, wealth, pow'r, we ſhould allow
Precedence and our loweſt bow:

In

In that is due diſtinction ſhown:
Eſteem is virtue's right alone.
With partial eye we're apt to ſee
The man of noble pedigree.
We're prepoſſeſt my lord inherits
In ſome degree his grandſire's merits;
For thoſe we find upon record,
But find him nothing but my lord.
When we with ſuperficial view
Gaze on the rich, we're dazzled too:
We know that wealth, well underſtood,
Hath frequent pow'r of doing good;
Then fancy that the thing is done,
As if the pow'r and will were one.
Thus oft the cheated croud adore
The thriving knaves that keep 'em poor.
The cringing train of pow'r ſurvey:
What creatures are ſo low as they!
With what obſequiouſneſs they bend!
To what vile actions condeſcend!
Their riſe is on their meanneſs built,
And flatt'ry is their ſmalleſt guilt.

What

What homage, rev'rence, adoration,
In ev'ry age, in ev'ry nation,
Have ſycophants to pow'r addreſt!
No matter who the pow'r poſſeſt.
Let miniſters be what they will,
You find their levees always fill:
Ev'n thoſe who have perplex'd a ſtate,
Whoſe actions claim contempt and hate,
Had wretches to applaud their ſchemes,
Though more abſurd than madmen's dreams.
When barb'rous Moloch was invok'd,
The blood of infants only ſmoak'd,
But here (unleſs all hiſt'ry lyes)
Whole realms have been a ſacrifice.
Look through all courts: 'Tis pow'r we find
The gen'ral idol of mankind;
There worſhipp'd under ev'ry ſhape:
Alike the lion, fox, and ape
Are follow'd by time-ſerving ſlaves,
Rich proſtitutes and needy knaves.
Who then ſhall glory in his poſt?
How frail his pride, how vain his boaſt!

The

The followers of his proſp'rous hour
Are as unſtable as his pow'r.
Pow'r, by the breath of flatt'ry nurſt,
The more it ſwells, is nearer burſt:
The bubble breaks, the gewgaw ends,
And in a dirty tear deſcends.

Once on a time, an ancient maid,
By wiſhes and by time decay'd,
To cure the pangs of reſtleſs thought,
In birds and beaſts amuſement ſought:
Dogs, parrots, apes, her hours employ'd;
With theſe alone ſhe talk'd and toy'd.
A huge Baboon her fancy took,
(Almoſt a man in ſize and look)
He finger'd ev'ry thing he found,
And mimick'd all the ſervants round;
Then too his parts and ready wit
Show'd him for ev'ry bus'neſs fit.
With all theſe talents, 'twas but juſt
That Pug ſhould hold a place of truſt:

So

So to her fav'rite was aſſign'd
The charge of all her feather'd kind;
'Twas his to tend 'em eve and morn,
And portion out their daily corn.
Behold him now, with haughty ſtride,
Aſſume a miniſterial pride.
The morning roſe. In hope of picking,
Swans, turkeys, peacocks, ducks, and chicken,
Fowls of all ranks ſurround his hut,
To worſhip his important ſtrut.
The miniſter appears. The croud
Now here, now there, obſequious bow'd.
This prais'd his parts, and that his face,
T'other his dignity in place:
From bill to bill the flatt'ry ran;
He hears and bears it like a man:
For, when we flatter ſelf-conceit,
We but his ſentiments repeat.
If we're too ſcrupulouſly juſt,
What profit's in a place of truſt?
The common practice of the great
Is, to ſecure a ſnug retreat:

So

So Pug began to turn his brain
(Like other folks in place) on gain.
An apple-woman's ſtall was near,
Well ſtock'd with fruits through all the year.
Here ev'ry day he cramm'd his guts,
Hence were his hoards of pears and nuts;
For 'twas agreed (in way of trade)
His payments ſhould in corn be made.
The ſtock of grain was quickly ſpent,
And no account which way it went;
Then too the poultry's ſtarv'd condition
Caus'd ſpeculations of ſuſpicion.
The facts were prov'd beyond diſpute:
Pug muſt refund his hoards of fruit;
And, though then miniſter in chief,
Was branded as a publick thief.
Diſgrac'd, deſpis'd, confin'd to chains,
He nothing but his pride retains.
A gooſe paſs'd by; he knew the face,
Seen ev'ry levee while in place.
What, no reſpect! no rev'rence ſhown!
How ſaucy are theſe creatures grown!

Not two days ſince (ſays he) you bow'd
The loweſt of my fawning croud.
Proud fool (replies the gooſe) 'tis true,
Thy corn a flutt'ring levee drew;
For that I join'd the hungry train,
And ſold thee flatt'ry for thy grain:
But then, as now, conceited ape,
We ſaw thee in thy proper ſhape.

FABLE

FABLE IV.

The Ant *in Office.*

To a FRIEND.

YOU tell me that you apprehend
My verſe may touchy folks offend.
In prudence too you think my rhimes
Should never ſquint at courtiers crimes;

For

For though nor this, nor that is meant,
Can we another's thoughts prevent?
You ask me if I ever knew
Court chaplains thus the lawn pursue.
I meddle not with gown or lawn:
Poets, I grant, to rise must fawn.
They know great ears are over-nice,
And never shock their patron's vice.
But I this hackney path despise;
'Tis my ambition not to rise:
If I must prostitute the muse,
The base conditions I refuse.
I neither flatter or defame;
Yet own I would bring guilt to shame.
If I corruption's hand expose,
I make corrupted men my foes,
What then? I hate the paultry tribe.
Be virtue mine: Be theirs the bribe.
I no man's property invade;
Corruption's yet no lawful trade;
Nor would it mighty ills produce,
Could I shame brib'ry out of use.

I know

I know 'twould cramp moſt politicians,
Were they tied down to theſe conditions:
'Twould ſtint their pow'r, their riches bound,
And make their parts ſeem leſs profound.
Were they deny'd their proper tools,
How could they lead their knaves and fools?
Were this the caſe, let's take a view,
What dreadful miſchiefs would enſue.
Though it might aggrandize the ſtate,
Could private lux'ry dine on plate?
Kings might indeed their friends reward,
But miniſters find leſs regard.
Informers, ſycophants, and ſpies
Would not augment the year's ſupplies:
Perhaps too, take away this prop,
An annual job or two might drop.
Beſides, if penſions were deny'd,
Could avarice ſupport its pride?
It might ev'n miniſters confound,
And yet the ſtate be ſafe and ſound.
I care not though 'tis underſtood;
I only mean my country's good:

And

And (let who will my freedom blame)
I wiſh all courtiers did the ſame.
Nay, though ſome folks the leſs might get,
I wiſh the nation out of debt.
I put no private man's ambition
With publick good in competition:
Rather than have our laws defac'd,
I'd vote a miniſter diſgrac'd.
I ſtrike at vice, be't where it will;
And what if great folks take it ill?
I hope, corruption, brib'ry, penſion,
One may with deteſtation mention:
Think you the law (let who will take it)
Can ſcandalum magnatum make it?
I vent no ſlander, owe no grudge,
Nor of another's conſcience judge:
At him or him I take no aim,
Yet dare againſt all vice declaim.
Shall I not cenſure breach of truſt,
Becauſe knaves know themſelves unjuſt?
That ſteward, whoſe account is clear,
Demands his honour may appear;

His

His actions never ſhun the light;
He is, and would be prov'd upright.
But then you think my fable bears
Alluſion too to ſtate affairs.
I grant it does: And who's ſo great,
That has the privilege to cheat?
If then in any future reign
(For miniſters may thirſt for gain)
Corrupted hands defraud the nation,
I bar no reader's application.

An Ant there was, whoſe forward prate
Controul'd all matters in debate;
Whether he knew the thing or no,
His tongue eternally would go;
For he had impudence at will,
And boaſted univerſal ſkill.
Ambition was his point in view;
Thus by degrees to pow'r he grew.
Behold him now his drift attain:
He's made chief treas'rer of the grain.

But as their ancient laws are juſt,
And puniſh breach of public truſt,
'Tis order'd (leſt wrong application
Should ſtarve that wiſe induſtrious nation)
That all accounts be ſtated clear,
Their ſtock, and what defray'd the year;
That auditors ſhall theſe inſpect,
And public rapine thus be check'd.
For this the ſolemn day was ſet;
The auditors in council met.
The gran'ry-keeper muſt explain
And balance his account of grain.
He brought (ſince he could not refuſe 'em,
Some ſcraps of paper to amuſe 'em.

An honeſt piſmire, warm with zeal,
In juſtice to the public weal,
Thus ſpoke. The nation's hoard is low.
From whence does this profuſion flow?
I know our annual fund's amount.
Why ſuch expence? and where's th' account

With wonted arrogance and pride,
The Ant in office thus reply'd.

Conſider

Conſider, Sirs, were ſecrets told,
How could the beſt-ſchem'd projects hold?
Should we ſtate myſteries diſcloſe,
'Twould lay us open to our foes.
My duty and my well-known zeal
Bid me our preſent ſchemes conceal:
But, on my honour, all th' expence
(Though vaſt) was for the ſwarm's defence.
They paſs'd th' account, as fair and juſt,
And voted him implicit truſt.
Next year again the gran'ry drain'd,
He thus his innocence maintain'd.
Think how our preſent matters ſtand,
What dangers threat from ev'ry hand;
What hoſts of turkeys ſtroll for food;
No farmer's wife but hath her brood.
Conſider, when invaſion's near,
Intelligence muſt coſt us dear;
And, in this tickliſh ſituation,
A ſecret told betrays the nation.

But, on my honour, all th' expence
(Though vaſt) was for the ſwarm's defence.
Again, without examination,
They thank'd his ſage adminiſtration.
The year revolves. Their treaſure ſpent,
Again in ſecret ſervice went.
His honour too again was pledg'd
To ſatisfy the charge alledg'd.
When thus, with panic ſhame poſſeſt,
An auditor his friends addreſt.
What are we? miniſterial tools.
We little knaves are greater fools.
At laſt this ſecret is explor'd;
'Tis our corruption thins the hoard.
For ev'ry grain we touch'd, at leaſt
A thouſand his own heaps increas'd,
Then, for his kin and fav'rite ſpies,
A hundred hardly could ſuffice.
Thus, for a paultry ſneaking bribe,
We cheat ourſelves and all the tribe;

For

For all the magazine contains
Grows from our annual toil and pains.
They vote th'-account ſhall be inſpected;
The cunning plund'rer is detected:
The fraud is ſentenc'd, and his hoard,
As due, to public uſe reſtor'd.

FABLE V.

The Bear in a Boat.

To a COXCOMB.

THAT man muſt daily wiſer grow,
Whoſe ſearch is bent himſelf to know:
Impartially he weighs his ſcope,
And on firm reaſon founds his hope;

He

He tries his ſtrength before the race,
And never ſeeks his own diſgrace;
He knows the compaſs, ſail and oar,
Or never launches from the ſhore;
Before he builds computes the coſt,
And in no proud purſuit is loſt:
He learns the bounds of human ſenſe:
And ſafely walks within the fence:
Thus, conſcious of his own defect,
Are pride and ſelf-importance check'd.
If then, ſelf-knowledge to purſue,
Direct our life in ev'ry view,
Of all the fools that pride can boaſt,
A coxcomb claims diſtinction moſt.
Coxcombs are of all ranks and kind,
They're not to ſex or age confin'd,
Or rich or poor, or great, or ſmall;
And vanity beſots 'em all.
By ignorance is pride increas'd;
Thoſe moſt aſſume who know the leaſt;
Their own falſe balance gives 'em weight,
But ev'ry other finds 'em light.

Not that all coxcombs follies ſtrike
And draw our ridicule alike;
To diff'rent merits each pretends:
This in love-vanity tranſcends;
That, ſmitten with his face and ſhape,
By dreſs diſtinguiſhes the ape;
'Tother with learning crams his ſhelf,
Knows books and all things but himſelf.
All theſe are fools of low condition,
Compar'd with coxcombs of ambition;
For thoſe, puff'd up with flatt'ry, dare
Aſſume a nation's various care:
They ne'er the groſſeſt praiſe miſtruſt,
Their ſycophants ſeem hardly juſt;
For theſe, in part alone, atteſt
The flatt'ry their own thoughts ſuggeſt.
In this wide ſphere a coxcomb's ſhown
In other realms beſides his own:
The ſelf-deem'd Machiavel at large,
By turns controuls in ev'ry charge.
Does commerce ſuffer in her rights?
'Tis he directs the naval flights.

What

What ſailor dares diſpute his ſkill?
He'll be an adm'ral when he will.
Now, meddling in the ſoldier's trade,
Troops muſt be hir'd, and levies made.
He gives embaſſadors their cue
His cobbled treaties to renew,
And annual taxes muſt ſuffice
The current blunders to diſguiſe.
When his crude ſchemes in air are loſt,
And millions ſcarce defray the coſt,
His arrogance (nought undiſmay'd)
Truſting in ſelf-ſufficient aid,
On other rocks miſguides the realm,
And thinks a pilot at the helm.
He ne'er ſuſpects his want of ſkill,
But blunders on from ill to ill;
And, when he fails of all intent,
Blames only unforeſeen event.
Leſt you miſtake the application,
The fable calls me to relation.

A Bear of ſhagg and manners rough,
At climbing trees expert enough,
For dextrouſly, and ſafe from harm,
Year after year he robb'd the ſwarm.
Thus, thriving on induſtrious toil,
He glory'd in his pilfer'd ſpoil.
This trick ſo ſwell'd him with conceit,
He thought no enterpriſe too great.
Alike in ſciences and arts,
He boaſted univerſal parts;
Pragmatic, buſy, buſtling, bold,
His arrogance was uncontroul'd:
And thus he made his party good,
And grew dictator of the wood.
The beaſts, with admiration, ſtare,
And think him a prodigious Bear.
Were any common booty got,
'Twas his each portion to allot;
For why, he found there might be picking,
Ev'n in the carving of a chicken.
Intruding thus, he by degrees
Claim'd too the butcher's larger fees.

And now his over-weening pride
In ev'ry province will preſide
No taſk too difficult was found.
His blund'ring noſe miſleads the hound:
In ſtratagem and ſubtle arts,
He over-rules the fox's parts.
It chanc'd, as on a certain day,
Along the bank he took his way,
A boat with rudder ſail and oar,
At anchor floated near the ſhore.
He ſtopt, and turning to his train,
Thus pertly vents his vaunting ſtrain:
What blund'ring puppies are mankind,
In ev'ry ſcience always blind!
I mock the pedantry of ſchools:
What are their compaſſes and rules?
From me that helm ſhall conduct learn,
And man his ignorance diſcern.
So ſaying, with audacious pride
He gains the boat and climbs the ſide:
The beaſts aſtoniſh'd line the ſtrand.
The anchor's weigh'd, he drives from land:

The

The ſlack ſail ſhifts from ſide to ſide,
The boat untrimm'd admits the tide.
Borne down, adrift, at random toſt,
His oar breaks ſhort, the rudder's loſt.
The Bear, preſuming in his ſkill,
Is here and there officious ſtill;
Till, ſtriking on the dang'rous ſands
Aground the ſhatter'd veſſel ſtands.
To ſee the bungler thus diſtreſt
The very fiſhes ſneer and jeſt;
Ev'n gudgeons join in ridicule,
To mortify the meddling fool.
The clam'rous watermen appear,
Threats, curſes, oaths inſult his ear;
Seiz'd, threſh'd and chain'd, he's dragg'd to land.
Deriſion ſhouts along the ſtrand.

FABLE

FABLE VI.

The Squire *and his* Cur.

To a COUNTRY-GENTLEMAN.

THE man of pure and ſimple heart
Through life diſdains a double part
He never needs the ſcreen of lyes
His inward boſom to diſguiſe.

In

In vain malicious tongues aſſail;
Let envy ſnarl, let ſlander rail,
From virtue's ſhield (ſecure from wound)
Their blunted venom'd ſhafts rebound.
So ſhines his light before mankind,
His actions prove his honeſt mind.
If in his country's cauſe he riſe,
Debating ſenates to adviſe,
Unbrib'd, unaw'd, he dares impart
The honeſt dictates of his heart;
No miniſterial frown he fears,
But in his virtue perſeveres.
But would you play the politician,
Whoſe hearts averſe to intuition,
Your lips at all times, nay, your reaſon
Muſt be controul'd by place and ſeaſon.
What ſtateſman could his pow'r ſupport,
Were lying tongues forbid the court?
Did princely ears to truth attend,
What miniſter could gain his end?
How could he raiſe his tools to place,
And how his honeſt foes diſgrace?

That

That politician tops his part,
Who readily can lye with art;
The man's proficient in his trade,
His pow'r is ſtrong, his fortune's made.
By that the int'reſt of the throne
Is made ſubſervient to his own:
By that have kings of old, deluded,
All their own friends for his excluded:
By that, his ſelfiſh ſchemes purſuing,
He thrives upon the public ruin.

* Antiochus with hardy pace * *Plutarch.*
Provok'd the dangers of the chace;
And, loſt from all his menial train,
Travers'd the wood and pathleſs plain:
A cottage lodg'd the royal gueſt;
The Parthian clown brought forth his beſt:
The king unknown his feaſt enjoy'd,
And various chat the hours employ'd.
From wine what ſudden friendſhip ſprings!
Frankly they talk'd of courts and kings.
We country-folks (the clown replies)
Could ope our gracious monarch's eyes:

The

The king, (as all our neighbours ſay)
Might he (god bleſs him!) have his way,
Is ſound at heart, and means our good,
And he would do it, if he could.
If truth in courts were not forbid,
Nor kings nor ſubjects would be rid.
Were he in pow'r, we need not doubt him;
But that transferr'd to thoſe about him,
On them he throws the regal cares:
And what mind they? their own affairs.
If ſuch rapacious hands he truſt,
The beſt of men may ſeem unjuſt:
From kings to coblers 'tis the ſame:
Bad ſervants wound their maſter's fame.
In this our neighbours all agree:
Would the king knew as much as we.
Here he ſtopt ſhort. Repoſe they ſought:
The peaſant ſlept, the monarch thought.
The courtiers learnt, at early dawn,
Where their loſt ſovereign was withdrawn.
The guards approach our hoſt alarms,
With gaudy coats the cottage ſwarms;

The crown and purple robes they bring,
And proſtrate fall before the king.
The clown was call'd; the royal gueſt
By due reward his thanks expreſt.
The king then, turning to the croud,
Who fawningly before him bow'd,
Thus ſpoke. Since, bent on private gain,
Your counſels firſt miſled my reign,
Taught and inform'd by you alone,
No truth the royal ear has known
Till here converſing. Hence, ye crew,
For now I know myſelf and you.
Whene'er the royal ear's engroſt,
State lyes but little genius coſt.
The favʼrite then ſecurely robs,
And gleans the nation with his jobs.
Franker and bolder grown in ill,
He daily poiſons dares inſtill;
And, as his preſent views ſuggeſt,
Inflames or ſooths the royal breaſt.
Thus wicked miniſters oppreſs,
When oft the monarch means redreſs.

Would

Would kings their private ſubjects hear,
A miniſter muſt talk with fear.
If honeſty oppos'd his views,
He dar'd not innocence accuſe;
'Twould keep him in ſuch narrow bound,
He could not right and wrong confound.
Happy were kings, could they diſcloſe
Their real friends and real foes!
Were both themſelves and ſubjects known,
A monarch's will might be his own:
Had he the uſe of ears and eyes,
Knaves would no more be counted wiſe.
But then a miniſter might loſe
(Hard caſe!) his own ambitious views.
When ſuch as theſe have vex'd a ſtate,
Purſu'd by univerſal hate,
Their falſe ſupport at once hath fail'd,
And perſevering truth prevail'd:
Expos'd, their train of fraud is ſeen,
Truth will at laſt remove the ſcreen.

A country

A country ſquire, by whim directed,
The true ſtaunch dogs of chace neglected;
Beneath his board no hound was fed;
His hand ne'er ſtroak'd the ſpaniel's head:
A ſnappiſh cur, alone careſt,
By lyes had baniſh'd all the reſt:
Yap had his ear; and defamation
Gave him full ſcope for converſation.
His ſycophants muſt be preferr'd;
Room muſt be made for all his herd:
Wherefore, to bring his ſchemes about,
Old faithful ſervants all muſt out.
The Cur on ev'ry creature flew,
(As other great men's puppies do)
Unleſs due court to him were ſhown,
And both their face and bus'neſs known.
No honeſt tongue an audience found,
He worried all the tenants round,
For why, he liv'd in conſtant fear,
Leſt truth by chance ſhould interfere.

If

If any ſtranger dar'd intrude,
The noiſy cur his heels purſu'd;
Now fierce with rage, now ſtruck with dread,
At once he ſnarled, bit and fled:
Aloof he bays with briſtling hair,
And thus in ſecret growls his fear.
Who knows but truth, in this diſguiſe,
May fruſtrate my beſt guarded lyes?
Should ſhe (thus maſk'd) admittance find.
That very hour my ruin's ſign'd.
Now in his howl's continu'd ſound
Their words were loſt, the voice was drown'd:
Ever in awe of honeſt tongues,
Thus ev'ry day he ſtrain'd his lungs.
It happen'd, in ill omen'd hour,
That Yap, unmindful of his pow'r,
Forſook his poſt, to love inclin'd;
A fav'rite bitch was in the wind;
By her ſeduc'd, in am'rous play
They friſk'd the joyous hours away.
Thus by untimely love purſuing,
Like Antony, he ſought his ruin.

For

For now the ſquire, unvex'd with noiſe,
An honeſt neighbour's chat enjoys.
Be free, (ſays he) your mind impart;
I love a friendly open heart.
Methinks my tenants ſhun my gate:
Why ſuch a ſtranger grown of late?
Pray tell me what offence they find.
'Tis plain they're not ſo well inclin'd.
Turn off your cur, (the farmer cries)
Who feeds your ear with daily lyes;
His ſnarling inſolence offends;
'Tis he that keeps you from your friends.
Were but that ſaucy puppy checkt,
You'd find again the ſame reſpect.
Hear only him, he'll ſwear it too,
That all our hatred is to you:
But learn from us your true eſtate;
'Tis that curſt cur alone we hate.
The Squire heard truth. Now Yap ruſh'd in;
The wide hall ecchoes with his din:
Yet truth prevail'd; and, with diſgrace,
The Dog was cudgell'd out of place.

FABLE

FABLE VII.

The Countryman *and* Jupiter.

To Myself.

HAVE you a friend (look round and ſpy)
So fond, ſo prepoſſeſs'd as I?
Your faults ſo obvious to mankind,
My partial eyes could never find.

When,

When, by the breath of fortune blown,
Your airy caſtles were o'erthrown,
Have I been over prone to blame,
Or mortified your hours with ſhame?
Was I e'er known to damp your ſpirit,
Or twit you with the want of merit?
'Tis not ſo ſtrange that fortune's frown
Still perſeveres to keep you down.
Look round, and ſee what others do.
Would you be rich and honeſt too?
Have you (like thoſe ſhe rais'd to place)
Been opportunely mean and baſe?
Have you (as times requir'd) reſign'd
Truth, honour, virtue, peace of mind?
If theſe are ſcruples, give her o'er;
Write, practice morals, and be poor.
The gifts of fortune truly rate;
Then tell me what would mend your ſtate.
If happineſs on wealth were built,
Rich rogues might comfort find in guilt.
As grows the Miſer's hoarded ſtore,
His fears, his wants, increaſe the more.

Think,

Think, *Gay*, (what ne'er may be the caſe)
Should Fortune take you into grace,
Would that your happineſs augment?
What can ſhe give beyond content?
Suppoſe yourſelf a wealthy heir,
With a vaſt annual income clear;
In all the affluence you poſſeſs
You might not feel one care the leſs:
Might you not then (like others) find,
With change of fortune, change of mind?
Perhaps, profuſe beyond all rule,
You might ſtart out a glaring fool;
Your luxury might break all bounds;
Plate, table, horſes, ſtewards, hounds,
Might ſwell your debts: Then luſt of play
No regal income can defray.
Sunk is all credit, writs aſſail,
And doom your future life to jail.
Or were you dignified with pow'r
Would that avert one penſive hour?
You might give avarice its ſwing,
Defraud a nation, blind a king:

Then

Then, from the hirelings in your cauſe
Though daily fed with falſe applauſe,
Could it a real joy impart?
Great guilt knew never joy at heart.
Is happineſs your point in view?
(I mean th' intrinſic and the true)
She nor in camps or courts reſides,
Nor in the humble cottage hides;
Yet found alike in ev'ry ſphere;
Who finds content, will find her there.
O'erſpent with toil, beneath the ſhade
A Peaſant reſted on his ſpade.
Good Gods, he cries, 'tis hard to bear
This load of life from year to year!
Soon as the morning ſtreaks the ſkies,
Induſtrious labour bids me riſe;
With ſweat I earn my homely fare,
And ev'ry day renews my care.
Jove heard the diſcontented ſtrain,
And thus rebuk'd the murm'ring ſwain.

Speak out your wants then, honeſt friend;
Unjuſt complaints the Gods offend.
If you repine at partial fate,
Inſtruct me what could mend your ſtate.
Mankind in ev'ry ſtation ſee.
What wiſh you? tell me what you'd be.
So ſaid, upborne upon a cloud,
The clown ſurvey'd the anxious croud.
Yon face of care, ſays Jove, behold;
His bulky bags are fill'd with gold.
See with what joy he counts it o'er!
That ſum to-day hath ſwell'd his ſtore.
Were I that man, (the Peaſant cry'd)
What bleſſing could I aſk beſide?
Hold, ſays the God; firſt learn to know
True happineſs from outward ſhow.
This optic glaſs of intuition—
Here, take it, view his true condition:
He look'd, and ſaw the miſer's breaſt,
A troubled ocean, ne'er at reſt;
Want ever ſtares him in the face,
And fear anticipates diſgrace:

With

With conſcious guilt he ſaw him ſtart;
Extortion gnaws his throbbing heart,
And never, or in thought or dream,
His breaſt admits one happy gleam.
May Jove, he cries, reject my pray'r,
And guard my life from guilt and care;
My ſoul abhors that wretch's fate.
O keep me in my humble ſtate!
But, ſee amidſt a gaudy croud,
Yon miniſter ſo gay and proud,
On him what happineſs attends,
Who thus rewards his grateful friends!
Firſt take the glaſs, the god replies,
Man views the world with partial eyes.
Good gods, exclaims the ſtartled wight,
Defend me from this hideous ſight!
Corruption with corroſive ſmart,
Lies cank'ring on his guilty heart;
I ſee him, with polluted hand,
Spread the contagion o'er the land.
Now av'rice with inſatiate jaws,
Now rapine with her harpy claws,

His boſom tears. His conſcious breaſt
Groans with a load of crimes oppreſt.
See him, mad and drunk with power,
Stand tott'ring on ambition's tower:
Sometimes, in ſpeeches vain and proud,
His boaſts inſult the nether croud;
Now, ſeiz'd with giddineſs and fear,
He trembles leſt his fall is near.
Was ever wretch like this, he cries?
Such miſery in ſuch diſguiſe!
The change, O Jove, I diſavow,
Still be my lot the ſpade and plough.
He next, confirm'd by ſpeculation,
Rejects the lawyer's occupation;
For he the ſtateſman ſeem'd in part,
And bore ſimilitude of heart.
Nor did the ſoldier's trade inflame
His hopes with thirſt of ſpoil and fame:
The miſeries of war he mourn'd,
Whole nations into deſarts turn'd.
By theſe have laws and rights been brav'd;
By theſe was free-born man inſlav'd:

When

When battles and invaſion ceaſe,
Why ſwarm they in the land of peace?
Such change (ſays he) may I decline;
The ſcythe and civil arms be mine!
Thus, weighing life in each condition,
The clown withdrew his raſh petition.
When thus the god. How mortals err!
If you true happineſs prefer,
'Tis to no rank of life confin'd,
But dwells in ev'ry honeſt mind.
Be juſtice then your ſole purſuit.
Plant virtue, and content's the fruit,
So Jove, to gratify the clown,
Where firſt he found him ſet him down.

FABLE VIII.

The Man, *the* Cat, *the* Dog, *and the* Fly.

To my NATIVE COUNTRY.

HAIL happy land, whoſe fertile grounds
The liquid fence of Neptune bounds;
By bounteous nature ſet apart,
The ſeat of induſtry and art.

O Britain,

O Britain, choſen port of trade,
May lux'ry ne'er thy ſons invade;
May never miniſter (intent
His private treaſures to augment)
Corrupt thy ſtate. If jealous foes
Thy rights of commerce dare oppoſe,
Shall not thy fleets their rapine awe?
Who is't preſcribes the ocean law?
Whenever neighb'ring ſtates contend,
'Tis thine to be the gen'ral friend.
What is't that rules in other lands?
On trade alone thy glory ſtands,
That benefit is unconfin'd,
Diffuſing good among mankind:
That firſt gave luſtre to thy reigns,
And ſcatter'd plenty o'er thy plains:
'Tis that alone thy wealth ſupplies,
And draws all Europe's envious eyes.
Be commerce then thy ſole deſign;
Keep that, and all the world is thine.
When naval traffick ploughs the main,
Who ſhares not in the merchant's gain?

'Tis that ſupports the regal ſtate,
And makes the farmer's heart elate;
The num'rous flocks, that cloathe the land,
Can ſcarce ſupply the loom's demand;
Prolific culture glads the fields,
And the bare heath a harveſt yields.
Nature expects mankind ſhould ſhare
The duties of the public care.
Who's born for ſloth? * To ſome we find
The plough-ſhares annual toil aſſign'd;
Some at the ſounding anvil glow;
Some the ſwift-ſliding ſhuttle throw;
Some ſtudious of the wind and tide,
From pole to pole our commerce guide;
Some (taught by induſtry) impart
With hands and feet the works of art;
While ſome of genius more refin'd,
With head and tongue aſſiſt mankind:
Each, aiming at one common end,
Proves to the whole a needful friend.
Thus, born each other's uſeful aid,
By turns are obligations paid.

* *Barrow.*

The

The monarch, when his table's ſpread,
Is to the clown oblig'd for bread;
And, when in all his glory dreſt,
Owes to the loom his royal veſt:
Do not the maſon's toil and care
Protect him from th' inclement air?
Does not the cutler's art ſupply
The ornament that guards his thigh?
All theſe, in duty, to the throne
Their common obligations own.
'Tis he (his own and people's cauſe)
Protects their properties and laws:
Thus they their honeſt toil employ,
And with content the fruits enjoy.
In ev'ry rank, or great or ſmall,
'Tis induſtry ſupports us all.

The animals, by want oppreſt,
To man their ſervices addreſt:
While each purſu'd their ſelfiſh good,
They hunger'd for precarious food;

Their hours with anxious cares were vext,
One day they fed, and ſtarv'd the next:
They ſaw that plenty, ſure and rife,
Was found alone in ſocial life;
That, mutual induſtry profeſt
The various wants of Man redreſt.

The Cat, half famiſh'd, lean and weak,
Demands the privilege to ſpeak.

Well, Puſs, (ſays Man) and what can you
To benefit the public do?

The Cat replies; theſe teeth, theſe claws,
With vigilance ſhall ſerve the cauſe.
The mouſe, deſtroy'd by my purſuit,
No longer ſhall your feaſts pollute;
Nor rats from nightly ambuſcade,
With waſteful teeth your ſtores invade.

I grant, ſays Man, to gen'ral uſe
Your parts and talents may conduce;
For rats and mice purloin our grain,
And threſhers whirl the flail in vain:
Thus ſhall the Cat, a foe to ſpoil,
Protect the farmer's honeſt toil.

Then

Then turning to the dog, he cry'd,
Well, Sir; be next your merits try'd.
Sir, ſays the Dog, by ſelf-applauſe
We ſeem to own a friendleſs cauſe.
Aſk thoſe who know me, if diſtruſt
E'er found me treach'rous or unjuſt.
Did I e'er faith or friendſhip break?
Aſk all thoſe creatures? let them ſpeak
My vigilance and truſty zeal
Perhaps might ſerue the public weal.
Might not your flocks in ſafety feed,
Were I to guard the fleecy breed?
Did I the nightly watches keep,
Could thieves invade you while you ſleep?
The man replies, 'Tis juſt and right,
Rewards ſuch ſervice ſhould requite.
So rare, in property, we find
Truſt uncorrupt among mankind,
That, taken in a public view,
The firſt diſtinction is your due.
Such merits all reward tranſcend;
Be then my comrade and my friend.

Addreſſing

Addreſſing now the Fly. From you
What public ſervice can accrue?
From me! the flutt'ring inſect ſaid;
I thought you knew me better bred.
Sir, I'm a gentleman. Is't fit
That I to induſtry ſubmit?
Let mean mechanics, to be fed,
By bus'neſs earn ignoble bread:
Loſt in exceſs of daily joys,
No thought, no care my life annoys.
At noon (the lady's mattin hour)
I ſip the tea's delicious flower:
On cates luxurioufly I dine,
And drink the fragrance of the vine.
Studious of elegance and eaſe,
Myſelf alone I ſeek to pleaſe.
The Man his pert conceit derides,
And thus the uſeleſs coxcomb chides.
Hence, from that peach, that downy ſeat;
No idle fool deſerves to eat.
Could you have ſapp'd the bluſhing rind,
And on that pulp ambroſial din'd,

Had

Had not ſome hand, with ſkill and toil,
To raiſe the tree, prepar'd the ſoil?
Conſider, ſot, what would enſue,
Were all ſuch worthleſs things as you:
You'd ſoon be forc'd (by hunger ſtung)
To make your dirty meals on dung,
On which ſuch deſpicable need,
Unpitied, is reduc'd to feed.
Beſides, vain ſelfiſh inſect, learn,
(If you can right and wrong diſcern)
That he who with induſtrious zeal
Contributes to the public weal,
By adding to the common good,
His own hath rightly underſtood.
So ſaying, with a ſudden blow
He laid the noxious vagrant low:
Cruſh'd in his luxury and pride,
The ſpunger on the public, died.

FABLE

FABLE IX.

The Jackall, Leopard, *and other Beaſts.*

To a Modern Politician.

I Grant corruption ſways mankind,
That int'reſt too perverts the mind,
That bribes have blinded common ſenſe,
Foil'd reaſon, truth and eloquence;

I grant

I grant you too, our preſent crimes
Can equal thoſe of former times.
Againſt plain facts ſhall I engage,
To vindicate our righteous age?
I know, that in a modern fiſt,
Bribes in full energy ſubſiſt:
Since then theſe arguments prevail,
And itching palms are ſtill ſo frail,
Hence politicians, you ſuggeſt,
Should drive the nail that goes the beſt;
That it ſhows parts and penetration,
To ply men with the right temptation.
To this, I humbly muſt diſſent,
Premiſing no reflection's meant.
Does juſtice, or the client's ſenſe,
Teach lawyers either ſide's defence?
The fee gives eloquence it's ſpirit;
That only is the client's merit.
Does art, wit, wiſdom, or addreſs,
Obtain the proſtitute's careſs?
The guinea (as in other trades)
From ev'ry hand alike perſuades.

Man,

Man, ſcripture ſays, is prone to evil;
But does that vindicate the devil?
Beſides, the more mankind are prone,
The leſs the devil's parts are ſhown.
Corruption's not of modern date;
It hath been try'd in ev'ry ſtate:
Great knaves of old their pow'r have fenc'd
By places, penſions, bribes, diſpens'd;
By theſe they glory'd in ſucceſs,
And impudently dar'd oppreſs;
By theſe deſpoticly they ſway'd,
And ſlaves extoll'd the hand that pay'd;
Nor parts nor genius were employ'd,
By theſe alone were realms deſtroy'd.
Now ſee theſe wretches in diſgrace,
Stript of their treaſures, pow'r and place;
View 'em abandon'd and forlorn,
Expos'd to juſt reproach and ſcorn.
What now is all your pride, your boaſt?
Where are your ſlaves, your flatt'ring hoſt?
What tongues now feed you with applauſe?
Where are the champions of your cauſe?

Now

Now ev'n that very fawning train,
Which ſhar'd the gleanings of your gain,
Preſs foremoſt who ſhall firſt accuſe
Your ſelfiſh jobs, your paultry views,
Your narrow ſchemes, your breach of truſt
And want of talents to be juſt.
What fools were theſe amidſt their pow'r!
How thoughtleſs of their adverſe hour!
What friends were made? A hireling herd,
For temporary votes preferr'd.
Was it, theſe ſycophants to get,
Your bounty ſwell'd a nation's debt?
You're bit. For theſe, like Swiſs, attend.
No longer pay, no longer friend.

The Lion is (beyond diſpute)
Allow'd the moſt majeſtic brute;
His valour and his gen'rous mind
Prove him ſuperior of his kind.
Yet to Jackalls (as 'tis averr'd)
Some lions have their pow'r transferr'd:

As

As if the parts of pimps and ſpies
To govern foreſts could ſuffice.
Once, ſtudious of his private good,
A proud Jackall oppreſt the wood;
To cram his own inſatiate jaws,
Invaded property and laws:
The foreſt groans with diſcontent,
Freſh wrongs the gen'ral hate foment.
The ſpreading murmurs reach'd his ear;
His ſecret hours were vex'd with fear:
Night after night he weighs the caſe,
And feels the terrors of diſgrace.
By friends (ſays he) I'll guard my ſeat,
By thoſe malicious tongues defeat;
I'll ſtrengthen pow'r by new allies,
And all my clam'rous foes deſpiſe.
To make the gen'rous beaſts his friends,
He cringes, fawns, and condeſcends;
But thoſe repuls'd his abject court,
And ſcorn'd oppreſſion to ſupport.
Friends muſt be had. He can't ſubſiſt.
Brides ſhall new proſelytes enliſt.

But

But theſe nought weigh'd in honeſt paws;
For bribes confeſs a wicked cauſe:
Yet think not ev'ry paw withſtands
What had prevail'd in human hands.
A tempting turnip's ſilver ſkin
Drew a baſe hog through thick and thin:
Bought with a ſtag's delicious haunch,
The mercenary wolf was ſtanch:
The convert fox grew warm and hearty,
A pullet gain'd him to the party:
The golden pippin in his fiſt,
A chatt'ring monkey join'd the liſt.
But ſoon, expos'd to public hate,
The fav'rite's fall redreſs'd the ſtate.
The Leopard, vindicating right,
Had brought his ſecret frauds to light.
As rats before the manſion falls,
Deſert late hoſpitable walls,
In ſhoals the ſervile creatures run,
To bow before the riſing ſun.
The hog with warmth expreſt his zeal,
And was for hanging thoſe that ſteal;

But

But hop'd, though low, the public hoard
Might half a turnip ſtill afford.
Since ſaving meaſures were profeſt,
A lamb's head was the wolf's requeſt.
The fox ſubmitted, if to touch
A goſlin wou'd be deem'd too much.
The monkey thought his grin and chatter
Might aſk a nut or ſome ſuch matter.
Ye hirelings, hence, the Leopard cries,
Your venal conſcience I deſpiſe:
He who the public good intends,
By bribes need never purchaſe friends;
Who acts this juſt, this open part,
Is propt by ev'ry honeſt heart.
Corruption now too late has ſhow'd,
That bribes are always ill beſtow'd:
By you your bubbled maſter's taught,
Time-ſerving tools, not friends, are bought.

FABLE

FABLE X.

The Degenerate Bees.

To the Reverend Dr. SWIFT, *Dean of St.* PATRICK'S.

THough courts the practice diſallow,
A friend at all times I'll avow.
In politicks I know 'tis wrong;
A friendſhip may be kept too long;

And

And what they call the prudent part,
Is to wear int'reſt next the heart.
As the times take a diff'rent face,
Old friendſhips ſhould to new give place.
I know too you have many foes,
That owning you is ſharing thoſe;
That ev'ry knave in ev'ry ſtation,
Of high and low denomination,
For what you ſpeak and what you write,
Dread you at once and bear you ſpite.
Such freedoms in your works are ſhown,
They can't enjoy what's not their own.
All dunces too in church and ſtate
In frothy nonſenſe ſhow their hate,
With all the petty ſcribbling crew,
(And thoſe pert ſots are not a few)
'Gainſt you and Pope their envy ſpurt.
The bookſellers alone are hurt.
Good Gods! by what a pow'rful race
(For blockheads may have pow'r and place)
Are ſcandals rais'd, and libels writ,
To prove your honeſty and wit;

Think

Think with yourſelf: thoſe worthy men
You know have ſuffer'd by your pen;
From them you've nothing but your due.
From hence 'tis plain, your friends are few:
Except myſelf, I know of none,
Beſides the wiſe and good alone.
To ſet the caſe in fairer light,
My fable ſhall the reſt recite;
Which (tho' unlike our preſent ſtate)
I for the moral's ſake relate.

A Bee of cunning, not of parts,
Luxurious, negligent of arts,
Rapacious, arrogant and vain,
Greedy of pow'r, but more of gain,
Corruption ſow'd throughout the hive.
By petty rogues the great ones thrive.
As pow'r and wealth his views ſupply'd,
'Twas ſeen in overbearing pride;
With him loud impudence had merit,
The Bee of conſcience wanted ſpirit;

And thoſe who follow'd honours rules
Were laugh'd to ſcorn for ſqueamiſh fools;
Wealth claim'd diſtinction, favour, grace,
And poverty alone was baſe;
He treated induſtry with ſlight,
Unleſs he found his profit by't:
Rights, laws, and liberties give way,
To bring his ſelfiſh ſchemes in play:
The ſwarm forgot the common toil,
To ſhare the gleanings of his ſpoil.

While vulgar ſouls, of narrow parts,
Waſte life in low mechanic arts,
Let us, (ſays he) to genius born,
The drudg'ry of our fathers ſcorn.
The waſp and drone, you muſt agree,
Live with more elegance than we;
Like gentlemen they ſport and play,
No bus'neſs interrupts the day;
Their hours to luxury they give,
And nobly on their neighbours live.

A ſtub-

A ſtubborn Bee among the ſwarm,
With honeſt indignation warm,
Thus from his cell with zeal replied.
I ſlight thy frowns, and hate thy pride.
The laws our native rights protect;
Offending thee, I thoſe reſpect.
Shall luxury corrupt the hive,
And none againſt the torrent ſtrive?
Exert the honour of your race;
He builds his riſe on your diſgrace.
'Tis induſtry our ſtate maintains:
'Twas honeſt toil and honeſt gains
That rais'd our ſires to pow'r and fame.
Be virtuous; ſave yourſelves from ſhame:
Know, that in ſelfiſh ends purſuing,
You ſcramble for the public ruin.
He, ſpoke; and, from his cell diſmiſs'd,
Was inſolently ſcoff'd and hiſs'd.
With him a friend or two reſign'd,
Diſdaining the degenerate kind.
Theſe drones, (ſays he) theſe inſects vile
(I treat 'em in their proper ſtile)

May for a time oppreſs the ſtate.
They own our virtue by their hate;
By that our merits they reveal,
And recommend our public zeal;
Diſgrac'd by this corrupted crew,
We're honour'd by the virtuous few.

FABLE

FABLE XI.

The Pack-Horſe *and the* Carrier.

To a YOUNG NOBLEMAN.

BEGIN, my lord, in early youth
To ſuffer, nay, encourage truth;
And blame me not for diſreſpect,
If I the flatt'rer's ſtile reject;

With that, by menial tongues ſupply'd,
You're daily cocker'd up in pride.
The tree's diſtinguiſh'd by the fruit.
Be virtue then your firſt purſuit:
Set your great anceſtors in view,
Like them deſerve the title too;
Like them ignoble actions ſcorn:
Let virtue prove you greatly born.
Though with leſs plate their ſide-board ſhone,
Their conſcience always was their own;
They ne'er at levees meanly fawn'd,
Nor was their honour yearly pawn'd;
Their hands, by no corruption ſtain'd,
The miniſterial bribe diſdain'd;
They ſerv'd the crown with loyal zeal,
Yet jealous of the public weal,
They ſtood the bulwark of our laws,
And wore at heart their country's cauſe;
By neither place or penſion bought,
They ſpoke and voted as they thought.

Thus

Thus did your ſires adorn their ſeat;
And ſuch alone are truly great.
If you the paths of learning ſlight,
You're but a dunce in ſtronger light:
In foremoſt rank, the coward, plac'd,
Is more conſpicuouſly diſgrac'd.
If you, to ſerve a paultry end,
To knaviſh jobs can condeſcend,
We pay you the contempt that's due;
In that you have precedence too.
Whence had you this illuſtrious name?
From virtue and unblemiſh'd fame.
By birth the name alone deſcends;
Your honour on yourſelf depends.
Think not your coronet can hide
Aſſuming ignorance and pride:
Learning by ſtudy muſt be won,
'Twas ne'er entail'd from ſon to ſon.
Superior worth your rank requires,
For that mankind reveres your ſires:
If you degen'rate from your race,
Their merits heighten your diſgrace.

A Carrier ev'ry night and morn
Would ſee his horſes eat their corn:
This ſunk the hoſtler's vails, 'tis true;
But then his horſes had their due.
Were we ſo cautious in all caſes,
Small gain would riſe from greater places.

The manger now had all its meaſure,
He heard the grinding teeth with pleaſure;
When all at once confuſion rung,
They ſnorted, joſtled, bit and flung.
A Pack-horſe turn'd his head aſide,
Foaming, his eye-balls ſwell'd with pride.

Good Gods! (ſays he) how hard's my lot
Is then my high deſcent forgot?
Reduc'd to drudg'ry and diſgrace,
(A life unworthy of my race)
Muſt I too bear the vile attacks
Of ragged ſcrubs and vulgar hacks?
See ſcurvy Roan, that brute ill-bred,
Dares from the manger thruſt my head!
Shall I, who boaſt a noble line,
On offals of theſe creatures dine?

Kick'd

Kick'd by old Ball! ſo mean a foe!
My honour ſuffers by the blow.
Newmarket ſpreads my grandſire's fame,
All jockeys ſtill revere his name:
There yearly are his triumphs told,
There all his maſſy plates enroll'd.
Whene'er led forth upon the plain,
You ſaw him with a liv'ry train;
Returning too with laurels crown'd,
You heard the drums and trumpets ſound.
Let it then, Sir, be underſtood,
Reſpect's my due; for I have blood.
Vainglorious fool (the carrier cry'd)
Reſpect was never paid to pride.
Know, 'twas the giddy, wilful heart
Reduc'd thee to this ſlaviſh part.
Did not thy headſtrong youth diſdain
To learn the conduct of the rein?
Thus coxcombs, blind to real merit,
In vicious frolicks fancy ſpirit.
What is't to me by whom begot?
Thou reſtif, pert, conceited ſot.

Your ſires I rev'rence; 'tis their due:
But, worthleſs fool, what's that to you?
Aſk all the carriers on the road,
They'll ſay thy keeping's ill-beſtow'd.
Then vaunt no more thy noble race,
That neither mends thy ſtrength or pace.
What profits me thy boaſt of blood?
An aſs hath more intrinſic good.
By outward ſhow let's not be cheated:
An aſs ſhould like an aſs be treated.

FABLE XII.

Pan *and* Fortune.

To a YOUNG HEIR.

SOON as your father's death was known
(As if th' eſtate had been their own)
The gameſters outwardly expreſt
The decent joy within your breaſt.

So laviſh, in your praiſe they grew,
As ſpoke their certain hopes in you.
One counts your income of the year,
How much in ready money clear.
No houſe, ſays he, is more compleat,
The garden's elegant and great.
How fine the park around it lies!
The timber's of a noble ſize.
Then count his jewels and his plate.
Beſides, 'tis no entail'd eſtate.
If caſh run low, his lands in fee
Are or for ſale or mortgage free.
Thus they, before you threw the main,
Seem'd to anticipate their gain.
Would you, when thieves are known abroad,
Bring forth your treaſures on the road?
Would not that fool abet the ſtealth,
Who raſhly thus expos'd his wealth?
Yet this you do, whene'er you play
Among the gentlemen of prey.
Could fools to keep their own contrive,
On what, on whom could gameſters thrive?

Is it in charity you game,
To ſave your worthy gang from ſhame?
Unleſs you furniſh'd daily bread,
Which way could idleneſs be fed?
Could theſe profeſſors of deceit
Within the law no longer cheat,
They muſt run bolder riſks for prey,
And ſtrip the trav'ler on the way.
Thus in your annual rents they ſhare,
And 'ſcape the nooſe from year to year.
Conſider, ere you make the bett,
That ſum might croſs your taylor's debt.
When you the pilf'ring rattle ſhake,
Is not your honour too at ſtake?
Muſt you not by mean lyes evade
To-morrow's duns from ev'ry trade?
By promiſes ſo often paid,
Is yet your taylor's bill defray'd?
Muſt you not pitifully fawn,
To have your butcher's writ withdrawn?
This muſt be done. In debts of play
Your honour ſuffers no delay;

And

And not this year's and next year's rent
The ſons of rapine can content.
Look round. The wrecks of play behold,
Eſtates diſmember'd, mortgag'd, ſold!
Their owners, now to jails confin'd,
Show equal poverty of mind.
Some, who the ſpoil of knaves were made,
Too late attempt to learn their trade.
Some, for the folly of one hour,
Become the dirty tools of pow'r,
And, with the mercenary liſt,
Upon court-charity ſubſiſt.
You'll find at laſt this maxim true,
Fools are the game which knaves purſue.

The foreſt (a whole cent'ry's ſhade)
Muſt be one waſteful ruin made:
No mercy's ſhown to age or kind,
The gen'ral maſſacre is ſign'd;
The park too ſhares the dreadful fate,
For duns grow louder at the gate.

Stern

Stern clowns, obedient to the ſquire,
(What will not barb'rous hands for hire?)
With brawny arms repeat the ſtroke;
Fall'n are the elm and rev'rend oak;
Through the long wood loud axes ſound,
And eccho groans with ev'ry wound.
To ſee the deſolation ſpread,
Pan drops a tear, and hangs his head;
His boſom now with fury burns,
Beneath his hoof the dice he ſpurns;
Cards too, in peeviſh paſſion torn,
The ſport of whirling winds are born.
To ſnails invet'rate hate I bear,
Who ſpoil the verdure of the year;
The caterpillar I deteſt,
The blooming ſpring's voracious peſt;
The locuſt too, whoſe rav'nous band
Spreads ſudden famine o'er the land.
But what are theſe? The dice's throw
At once hath laid a foreſt low:
The cards are dealt, the bett is made,
And the wide park hath loſt its ſhade.

Thus

Thus is my kingdom's pride defac'd,
And all its ancient glories waſte.
All this (he cries) is Fortune's doing,
'Tis thus ſhe meditates my ruin:
By Fortune, that falſe, fickle jade,
More havock in one hour is made,
Than all the hungry inſect race,
Combin'd, can in an age deface.
Fortune, by chance, who near him paſt,
O'erheard the vile aſperſion caſt.
Why, Pan, (ſays ſhe) what's all this rant?
'Tis ev'ry country bubble's cant.
Am I the patroneſs of vice?
Is't I who cog or palm the dice?
Did I the ſhuffling art reveal,
To mark the cards, or range the deal?
In all th' employments men purſue,
I mind the leaſt what gameſters do.
There may (if computation's juſt)
One now and then my conduct truſt:
I blame the fool; for what can I,
When ninety-nine my pow'r defy?

Theſe

Theſe truſt alone their fingers ends,
And not one ſtake on me depends.
Whene'er the gaming board is ſet,
Two claſſes of mankind are met;
But if we count the greedy race,
The knaves fill up their greater ſpace.
'Tis a groſs error, held in ſchools,
That fortune always favours fools:
In play it never bears diſpute;
That doctrine theſe fell'd oaks confute.
Then why to me ſuch rancour ſhow?
'Tis Folly, Pan, that is thy foe.
By me his late eſtate he won,
But he by Folly was undone.

FABLE

FABLE XIII.

Plutus, Cupid, *and* Time.

OF all the burthens man muſt bear,
Time ſeems moſt galling and ſevere;
Beneath this grievous load oppreſt
We daily meet ſome friend diſtreſt.

What

What can one do? I roſe at nine.
'Tis full ſix hours before we dine:
Six hours! no earthly thing to do!
Would I had doz'd in bed till two.
A pamphlet is before him ſpread,
And almoſt half a page is read;
Tir'd with the ſtudy of the day,
The flutt'ring ſheets are toſt away.
He opes his ſnuff-box, hums an air,
Then yawns and ſtretches in his chair.
Not twenty, by the minute-hand!
Good Gods, ſays he, my watch muſt ſtand!
How muddling 'tis on books to pore!
I thought I'd read an hour or more.
The morning, of all hours, I hate.
One can't contrive to riſe too late.
To make the minutes faſter run,
Then too his tireſome ſelf to ſhun,
To the next coffee-houſe he ſpeeds,
Takes up the news, ſome ſcraps he reads.
Saunt'ring, from chair to chair he trails,
Now drinks his tea, now bites his nails:

He

He ſpies a partner of his woe;
By chat afflictions lighter grow;
Each other's grievances they ſhare,
And thus their dreadful hours compare.
Says Tom, ſince all men muſt confeſs
That time lies heavy more or leſs;
Why ſhould it be ſo hard to get,
Till two, a party at piquet?
Play might relieve the lagging morn:
By cards long wintry nights are born.
Does not quadrille amuſe the fair,
Night after night, throughout the year?
Vapours and ſpleen forgot, at play
They cheat uncounted hours away.
My caſe, ſays Will, then muſt be hard,
By want of ſkill from play debarr'd.
Courtiers kill time by various ways;
Dependence wears out half their days.
How happy theſe, whoſe time ne'er ſtands!
Attendance takes it off their hands.
Were it not for this curſed ſhow'r,
The park had whil'd away an hour.

At court, without or place or view,
I daily loſe an hour two:
It fully anſwers my deſign,
When I have pick'd up friends to dine.
The tavern makes our burthen light;
Wine puts our time and care to flight;
At ſix (hard caſe!) they call to pay.
Where can one go? I hate the play.
From ſix to ten! Unleſs in ſleep,
One cannot ſpend the hours ſo cheap.
The comedy's no ſooner done,
But ſome aſſembly is begun.
Loit'ring from room to room I ſtray,
Converſe, but nothing hear or ſay;
Quite tir'd, from fair to fair I roam.
So ſoon! I dread the thoughts of home:
From thence, to quicken ſlow-pac'd night,
Again my tavern friends invite;
Here too our early mornings paſs,
Till drowſy ſleep retards the glaſs.
Thus they their wretched life bemoan,
And make each other's caſe their own.

Con-

Conſider, friends, no hour rolls on,
But ſomething of your grief is gone:
Were you to ſchemes of bus'neſs bred,
Did you the paths of learning tread,
Your hours, your days would fly too faſt;
You'd then regret the minute paſt.
Time's fugitive and light as wind;
'Tis indolence that clogs your mind:
That load from off your ſpirits ſhake,
You'll own, and grieve for your miſtake.
Awhile your thoughtleſs ſpleen ſuſpend,
Then read and (if you can) attend.

As Plutus, to divert his care,
Walk'd forth one morn to take the air,
Cupid o'ertook his ſtrutting pace.
Each ſtar'd upon the ſtranger's face.
'Till recollection ſet 'em right;
For each knew t'other but by ſight.
After ſome complimental talk,
Time met 'em, bow'd, and join'd their walk.

Their

Their chat on various ſubjects ran,
But moſt, what each had done for man.
Plutus aſſumes a haughty air,
Juſt like our purſe-proud fellows here.
Let kings, (ſays he) let coblers tell,
Whoſe gifts among mankind excel.
Conſider courts: What draws their train
Think you 'tis loyalty or gain?
That ſtateſmen hath the ſtrongeſt hold
Whoſe tool of politics is gold:
By that, in former reigns, 'tis ſaid,
The knave in pow'r hath ſenates led:
By that alone he ſway'd debates,
Enrich'd himſelf, and beggar'd ſtates.
Forego your boaſt. You muſt conclude,
That's moſt eſteem'd that's moſt purſu'd.
Think too in what a woful plight
That wretch muſt live whoſe pocket's light:
Are not his hours by want depreſt?
Penurious care corrodes his breaſt:
Without reſpect, or love, or friends,
His ſolitary day deſcends.

You

You might, ſays Cupid, doubt my parts,
My knowledge too in human hearts,
Should I the pow'r of gold diſpute,
Which great examples might confute.
I know, when nothing elſe prevails,
Perſuaſive money ſeldom fails;
That beauty too (like other wares)
Its price, as well as conſcience, bears.
Then marriage (as of late profeſt)
Is but a money job at beſt:
Conſent, compliance may be ſold;
But love's beyond the price of gold.
Smugglers there are, who, by retale,
Expoſe what they call love by ſale:
Such bargains are an arrant cheat;
You purchaſe flatt'ry and deceit.
Thoſe who true love have ever try'd,
(The common cares of life ſupply'd)
No wants endure, no wiſhes make,
But ev'ry real joy partake;
All comfort on themſelves depends,
They want nor pow'r, nor wealth, nor frrends:

Love

Love then hath ev'ry bliſs in ſtore;
'Tis friendſhip, and 'tis ſomething more:
Each other ev'ry wiſh they give.
Not to know love, is not to live.
Or love, or money, (Time reply'd)
Were men the queſtion to decide,
Would bear the prize; on both intent
My boon's neglected or miſpent.
'Tis I who meaſure vital ſpace,
And deal out years to human race:
Though little priz'd and ſeldom ſought,
Without me gold or love are nought.
How does the miſer time employ?
Did I e'er ſee him life enjoy?
By me forſook, the hoards he won
Are ſcatter'd by his laviſh ſon.
By me all uſeful arts are gain'd,
Wealth, learning, wiſdom is attain'd.
Who then would think (ſince ſuch my pow'r)
That e'er I knew an idle hour?
So ſubtile and ſo ſwift I fly
Love's not more fugitive than I.

Who

Who hath not heard coquettes complain
Of days, months, years, miſpent in vain?
For time miſus'd they pine and waſte,
And love's ſweet pleaſures never taſte.
Thoſe who direct their time aright,
If love or wealth their hopes excite,
In each purſuit fit hours employ'd,
And both by time have been enjoy'd.
How heedleſs then are mortals grown?
How little is their int'reſt known?
In ev'ry view they ought to mind me,
For when once loſt they never find me.
He ſpoke. The gods no more conteſt,
And his ſuperior gift confeſt;
That time (when truly underſtood)
Is the moſt precious earthly good.

FABLE

FABLE XV.

The Owl, *the* Swan, *the* Cock, *the* Spider, *the* Aſs, *and the* Farmer.

To a MOTHER.

CONverſing with your ſprightly boys,
Your eyes have ſpoke the mother's joy.
With what delight I've heard you quote
Their ſayings in imperfect note!
I grant, in body and in mind,
Nature appears profuſely kind.

Truſt not to that. Act you your part;
Imprint juſt morals on their heart;
Impartially their talents ſcan:
Juſt education forms the man.
Perhaps (their genius yet unknown)
Each lot of life's already thrown;
That this ſhall plead, the next ſhall fight,
The laſt aſſert the church's right.
I cenſure not the fond intent;
But how precarious is th' event!
By talents miſapplied and croſt,
Conſider, all your ſons are loſt.
One day (the tale's by Martial penn'd)
A father thus addreſs'd his friend.
To train my boy and call forth ſenſe,
You know I've ſtuck at no expence;
I've try'd him in the ſev'ral arts,
(The lad no doubt hath latent parts)
Yet trying all he nothing knows,
But crab-like rather backward goes.
Teach me what yet remains undone;
'Tis your advice ſhall fix my ſon.
Sir, ſays the friend, I've weigh'd the matter;
Excuſe me, for I ſcorn to flatter;
Make him (nor think his genius checkt)
A herald or an architect.

Perhaps

Perhaps (as commonly 'tis known)
He heard th' advice and took his own.
The boy wants wit; he's ſent to ſchool,
Where learning but improves the fool:
The college next muſt give him parts,
And cram him with the lib'ral arts.
Whether he blunders at the bar,
Or owes his infamy to war,
Or if by licence or degree
The ſexton ſhare the doctor's fee,
Or from the pulpit by the hour
He weekly floods of nonſenſe pour,
We find (th' intent of nature foil'd)
A taylor or a butcher ſpoil'd.
Thus miniſters have royal boons
Conferr'd on blockheads and buffoons:
In ſpite of nature, merit, wit,
Their friends for ev'ry poſt were fit.
But now let ev'ry muſe confeſs
That merit finds its due ſucceſs:
Th' examples of our days regard;
Where's virtue ſeen without reward?
Diſtinguiſh'd and in place you find
Deſert and worth of ev'ry kind.
Survey the rev'rend bench, and ſee
Religion, learning, piety:

The patron, ere he recommends,
Sees his own image in his friends.
Is honeſty diſgrac'd and poor?
What is't to us what was before?
We all of times corrupt have heard,
When paultry minions were preferr'd;
When all great offices, by dozens,
Were fill'd by brothers, ſons, and couſins:
What matter ignorance and pride?
The man was happily ally'd.
Provided that his clerk was good,
What though he nothing underſtood?
In church and ſtate, the ſorry race
Grew more conſpicuous fools in place.
Such heads, as then a treaty made,
Had bungled in the cobler's trade.
Conſider, patrons, that ſuch elves
Expoſe your folly with themſelves.
'Tis your's, as 'tis the parent's care,
To fix each genius in its ſphere.
Your partial hand can wealth diſpenſe,
But never give a blockhead ſenſe.

An owl of magiſterial air,
Of ſolemn voice, of brow auſtere,

Aſſum'd

Aſſum'd the pride of human race,
And bore his wiſdom in his face.
Not to depreciate learned eyes,
I've ſeen a pedant look as wiſe.
Within a barn, from noiſe retir'd,
He ſcorn'd the world, himſelf admir'd,
And, like an ancient ſage, conceal'd
The follies public life reveal'd.
Philoſophers of old, he read,
Their country's youth to ſcience bred,
Their manner form'd for ev'ry ſtation,
And deſtin'd each his occupation.
When Xenophon, by numbers brav'd,
Retreated, and a people ſav'd,
That laurel was not all his own;
The plant by Socrates was ſown.
To Ariſtotle's greater name
The Macedonian ow'd his fame.
Th' Athenian bird, with pride replete,
Their talents equall'd in conceit;
And, copying the Socratic rule,
Set up for maſter of a ſchool.
Dogmatic jargon learnt by heart,
Trite ſentences, hard terms of art,
To vulgar ears ſeem'd ſo profound,
They fancy'd learning in the ſound.

The ſchool had fame: the crouded place
With pupils ſwarm'd of ev'ry race.
With theſe the Swan's maternal care
Had ſent her ſcarce-fledg'd cygnet heir:
The Hen (though fond and loth to part)
Here lodg'd the darling of her heart:
The ſpider, of mechanic kind,
Aſpir'd to ſcience more refin'd:
The aſs learnt metaphors and tropes,
But moſt on muſic fix'd his hopes.
The pupils now, advanc'd in age,
Were call'd to tread life's buſy ſtage;
And to the maſter 'twas ſubmitted,
That each might to his part be fitted.
The Swan, ſays he, in arms ſhall ſhine:
The ſoldier's glorious toil be thine.
The Cock ſhall mighty wealth attain:
Go, ſeek it on the ſtormy main.
The court ſhall be the Spider's ſphere;
Pow'r, fortune ſhall reward him there.
In muſic's art the Aſs's fame
Shall emulate Corelli's name.
Each took the part that he adviſ'd,
And all were equally deſpis'd.
A Farmer, at his folly mov'd,
The dull preceptor thus reprov'd.

Block-

Blockhead, ſays he, by what you've done,
One would have thought 'em each your ſon;
For parents, to their offspring blind,
Conſult not parts nor turn of mind;
But ev'n in infancy decree
What this, what t'other ſon ſhall be.
Had you with judgment weigh'd the caſe,
Their genius thus had fix'd their place:
The Swan had learnt the ſailor's art;
The Cock had play'd the ſoldier's part;
The Spider in the weaver's trade
With credit had a fortune made;
But for the ſole, in ev'ry claſs
The blockhead had appear'd an Aſs.

This wants an heir; the line is loſt:
Why was that vain entail engroſt?
Can'ſt thou diſcern another's mind?
What is't you envy? Envy's blind.
Tell envy, when ſhe would annoy,
That thouſands want what you enjoy.
The dinner muſt be diſh'd at one.
Where's this vexatious turnſpit gone?
Unleſs the ſkulking cur is caught,
The ſir-loin's ſpoil'd and I'm in fault.
Thus ſaid; (for ſure you'll think it fit
That I the cook-maid's oaths omit)
With all the fury of a cook,
Her cooler kitchen Nan forſook;
The broomſtick o'er her head ſhe waves,
She ſweats, ſhe ſtamps, ſhe puffs, ſhe raves;
The ſneaking cur before her flies,
She whiſtles, calls, fair ſpeech ſhe tries,
Theſe nought avail; her choler burns;
The fiſt and cudgel threat by turns.
With haſty ſtride ſhe preſſes near,
He ſlinks aloof, and growls with fear.
Was ever cur ſo curs'd, he cry'd,
What ſtar did at my birth preſide!
Am I for life by compact bound
To tread the wheel's eternal round?

Inglorious

Inglorious taſk! of all our race
No ſlave is half ſo mean and baſe.
Had fate a kinder lot aſſign'd,
And form'd me of the lap-dog kind,
I then, in higher life employ'd,
Had indolence and eaſe enjoy'd,
And, like a gentleman careſt,
Had been the lady's fav'rite gueſt.
Or were I ſprung from ſpaniel line,
Was his ſagacious noſtril mine,
By me, their never-erring guide,
From wood and plain their feaſts ſupply'd,
Knights, ſquires, attendant on my pace,
Had ſhar'd the pleaſures of the chace.
Endu'd with native ſtrength and fire,
Why call'd I not the lion ſire?
A lion! ſuch mean views I ſcorn.
Why was not I of woman born?
Who dares with reaſon's pow'r contend?
On man we brutal ſlaves depend;
To him all creatures tribute pay,
And luxury employs his day.
An Ox by chance o'erheard his moan,
And thus rebuk'd the lazy drone.
Dare you at partial fate repine?
How kind's your lot compar'd with mine!

Decreed

Decreed to toil, the barb'rous knife
Hath ſever'd me from ſocial life;
Urg'd by the ſtimulating goad,
I drag the cumbrous waggon's load;
'Tis mine to tame the ſtubborn plain,
Break the ſtiff ſoil and houſe the grain;
Yet I without a murmur bear
The various labours of the year.
But then conſider that one day
(Perhaps the hour's not far away)
You, by the duties of your poſt,
Shall turn the ſpit when I'm the roaſt;
And for reward ſhall ſhare the feaſt,
I mean, ſhall pick my bones at leaſt.
'Till now, th' aſtoniſh'd cur replies,
I look'd on all with envious eyes;
How falſe we judge by what appears!
All creatures feel their ſev'ral cares.
If thus yon mighty beaſt complains,
Perhaps man knows ſuperior pains.
Let envy then no more torment.
Think on the Ox, and learn content.
Thus ſaid; cloſe-following at her heel,
With chearful heart he mounts the wheel.

FABLE

FABLE XVI.

The Ravens, *the* Sexton, *and the* Earth-worm.

To LAURA.

LAURA, methinks you're over-nice.
True. Flatt'ry is a ſhocking vice;
Yet ſure, whene'er the praiſe is juſt,
One may commend without diſguſt.
Am I a privilege deny'd,
Indulg'd by ev'ry tongue beſide?

How

How ſingular are all your ways;
A woman, and averſe to praiſe!
If 'tis offence ſuch truths to tell,
Why do your merits thus excel?
Since then I dare not ſpeak my mind,
A truth conſpicuous to mankind;
Though in full luſtre ev'ry grace
Diſtinguiſh'd your celeſtial face,
Though beauties of inferior ray
(Like ſtars before the orb of day)
Turn pale and fade: I check my lays,
Admiring what I dare not praiſe.
If you the tribute due diſdain,
The muſe's mortifying ſtrain
Shall, like a woman, in mere ſpight
Set beauty in a moral light.
Though ſuch revenge might ſhock the ear
Of many a celebrated fair;
I mean that ſuperficial race
Whoſe thoughts ne'er reach beyond their face,
What's that to you? I but diſpleaſe
Such ever-girliſh ears as theſe.
Virtue can brook the thoughts of age,
That laſts the ſame through ev'ry ſtage.
Though you by time muſt ſuffer more
Than ever woman loſt before,

To

To age is ſuch indiff'rence ſhown,
As if your face were not your own.
Were you by Antoninus taught,
Or is it native ſtrength of thought,
That thus, without concern or fright,
You view yourſelf by reaſon's light?
Thoſe eyes of ſo divine a ray,
What are they? mould'ring, mortal clay.
Thoſe features, caſt in heav'nly mould,
Shall, like my courſer earth, grow old;
Like common graſs, the faireſt flow'r
Muſt feel the hoary ſeaſon's pow'r.
How weak, how vain is human pride!
Dares man upon himſelf confide?
The wretch who glories in his gain,
Amaſſes heaps on heaps in vain,
Why loſe we life in anxious cares
To lay in hoards for future years?
Can thoſe (when tortur'd by diſeaſe)
Chear our ſick heart, or purchaſe eaſe?
Can thoſe prolong one gaſp of breath,
Or calm the troubled hour of death?
What's beauty? call you that your own,
A flow'r that fades as ſoon as blown?
What's man in all his boaſt of ſway?
Perhaps the tyrant of a day.

Alike

Alike the laws of life take place
Through ev'ry branch of human race:
The monarch of long regal line
Was rais'd from duſt as frail as mine:
Can he pour health into his veins,
Or cool the fever's reſtleſs pains?
Can he (worn down in nature's courſe)
New-brace his feeble nerves with force?
Can he (how vain is mortal pow'r!)
Stretch life beyond the deſtin'd hour?
Conſider, man; weigh well thy frame;
The king, the beggar is the ſame.
Duſt form'd us all. Each breathes his day,
Then ſinks into his native clay.
Beneath a venerable yew
That in the lonely church-yard grew,
Two ravens ſate. In ſolemn croak
Thus one his hungry friend beſpoke.
Methinks I ſcent ſome rich repaſt;
The ſavour ſtrengthens with the blaſt,
Snuff then; the promis'd feaſt inhale,
I taſte the carcaſe in the gale.
Near yonder trees, the farmer's ſteed,
From toil and daily drudg'ry freed,
Hath groan'd his laſt. A dainty treat!
To birds of taſte delicious meat.

A Sexton,

A Sexton, buſy at his trade,
To hear their chat ſuſpends his ſpade:
Death ſtruck him with no farther thought,
Than merely as the fees he brought.
Was ever two ſuch blund'ring fowls,
In brains and manners leſs than owls!
Blockheads, ſays he, learn more reſpect,
Know ye on whom ye thus reflect?
In this ſame grave (who does me right,
Muſt own the work is ſtrong and tight)
The ſquire that yon fair hall poſſeſt,
To night ſhall lay his bones at reſt.
Whence could the groſs miſtake proceed?
The ſquire was ſomewhat fat indeed.
What then? The meaneſt bird of prey
Such want of ſenſe could ne'er betray,
For ſure ſome diff'rence muſt be found
(Suppoſe the ſmelling organ ſound)
In carcaſes, (ſay what ye can)
Or where's the dignity of man?
With due reſpect to human race
The ravens undertook the caſe.
In ſuch ſimilitude of ſcent,
Man ne'er could think reflection meant.
As Epicures extol a treat,
And ſeem their ſav'ry words to eat,

They

They prais'd dead horſe, luxurious food,
The ven'ſon of the preſcient brood.
The Sexton's indignation mov'd,
The mean compariſon reprov'd;
Their undiſcerning palate blam'd,
Which two legg'd-carrion thus defam'd.
Reproachful ſpeech from either ſide
The want of argument ſupply'd.
They rail, revile: As often ends
The conteſt of diſputing friends.
Hold, ſays the fowl; ſince human pride
With confutation ne'er comply'd,
Let's ſtate the caſe, and then refer
The knotty point. For taſte may err.
As thus he ſpoke, from out the mould
An Earth-worm, huge of ſize, unroll'd
His monſtrous length. They ſtrait agree
To chuſe him as their referee.
So to th' experience of his jaws
Each ſtates the merit of his cauſe.
He paus'd, and with a ſolemn tone
Thus made his ſage opinion known.
On carcaſes of ev'ry kind
This maw hath elegantly din'd;
Provok'd by luxury or need,
On beaſt or fowl or man I feed:

Such

Such ſmall diſtinction in the ſavour,
By turns I chuſe the fancied flavour;
Yet I muſt own (that human beaſt)
A glutton is the rankeſt feaſt.
Man, ceaſe this boaſt; for human pride
Hath various tracts to range beſide.
The prince who kept the world in awe,
The judge whoſe dictate fix'd the law,
The rich, the poor, the great, the ſmall,
Are levell'd. Death confounds them all.
Then think not that we reptiles ſhare
Such cates, ſuch elegance of fare;
The only true and real good
Of man was never vermine's food:
'Tis ſeated in th' immortal mind;
Virtue diſtinguiſhes mankind,
And that (as yet ne'er harbour'd here)
Mounts with the ſoul we know not where.
So, good-man Sexton, ſince the caſe
Appears with ſuch a dubious face,
To neither I the cauſe determine,
For diff'rent taſtes pleaſe diff'rent vermine.

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